

Sunday, Nov 28, 2021

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Light up the night

In an unusual conjoining of celebrations, we begin the season of Advent today as our Jewish friends begin the eight-day festival of lights known as Chanukah tonight. It's intriguing to reflect on how Advent too is an extended celebration of moving from the darkness of history into the light of Christ's coming. Light remains a symbol of spiritual illumination, abandoning the gloom of ignorance for knowledge and the shadow of foolishness for wisdom. As we string holiday lights and decorate with sparkling ornaments, let's consciously choose against error's dark deceptions and ally ourselves with the light of truth.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12—4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 (3). *"Be vigilant at all times . . . to stand before the Son of Man."*

Monday, Nov 29, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Have yourself an evergreen Advent

The origins of the Advent wreath are unclear. Like many holiday traditions, they may be pre-Christian, and like many of today's Christmas traditions, Advent wreaths were popularized by Germans, who brought them to the United States. No matter where they came from or how they differ, Advent wreaths are rich in symbolism. The candles are lit as a sign of hope to dispel the darkness. The evergreen, wrapped in a circle, signifies continuous life. The prickly leaves of holly are like the crown of thorns. Pinecones symbolize resurrection. If you don't already have one, consider making one as a craft project this Advent, and add elements that have symbolic meaning for you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175). *"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed."*

Tuesday, Nov 30, 2021

FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

Can you follow directions?

Sometimes what we appreciate about saints comes from other saints. Such is the case with Saint Andrew and his brother, Simon Peter, of whom Saint Gregory the Great said: "At a single command" from Jesus, they "leaving their nets followed the Redeemer. Up to that time, they had not seen him perform any miracles. They had heard nothing from him concerning a reward of eternal joy." All Jesus had to do was ask them to follow. This Advent, listen for what Jesus may be asking of you; pray for the trust that Andrew had, to simply follow.

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684). *"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Wednesday, Dec 01, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Guess who is on the way?

On this Wednesday of the First Week of Advent, we look forward to the second coming of Christ. *Advent* comes from the Latin word for *arriving*. We have all experienced brokenness and hopelessness in our lives. You may know and cross paths with someone yearning for Jesus' healing power and awareness of his presence in their life. Has your mind, heart, body, and spirit been hungry for spiritual nourishment? Have you been healed by

Jesus? Do you want to share that same healing experience with others? Consider simple ways that you can share with a hurting friend the Good News that Jesus is on the way!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37 (177). *"I do not want to send them away hungry."*

Thursday, Dec 02, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Seek to unite, not divide

It's human nature to see the good in our own habits, ways, and traditions, but at the same time, Pope Francis has encouraged Christians to acknowledge the validity of other spiritual paths to God. The Holy Father's focus on what unites humanity spiritually is an important lesson for a world community that depends more than ever on cooperation. As you begin Advent, look for ways that you are united spiritually with people who are part of your life, no matter what their faith tradition is.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178). *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven."*

Friday, Dec 03, 2021

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Creation celebrates diversity

"If you embrace diversity, but ignore disability, you're doing it wrong." This popular phrase on social media reflects the venerable tradition of Catholic social teaching. On this Day of Persons with Disabilities, remember that in following Jesus, we are committed to promoting and protecting the dignity of all humans. At times, we as church have led the way in this, and other times we have fallen short. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to our faith. Why? Because we believe that each person is made in the image of God. Imagine that: In you—with all your strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and unique traits—we see an image of God. What does that do within you?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 29:17-24; Matthew 9:27-31 (179). *"And their eyes were opened."*

Saturday, Dec 04, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DAMASCENE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

The embodiment of faith

John Damascene, priest, monk, and poet, was an early defender of the use of religious icons—images of the sacred—at a time in the early Middle Ages when a movement to strip religious life and worship of all images—called *iconoclasm*—had a following. Thanks to John's vision—perhaps rooted in his sense of the power of the poetic to move people—religious icons are cherished, especially in the Eastern church but also throughout the Catholic world. Our faith is an embodied faith, an incarnated faith. Wear it proudly!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180). *"Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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